

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed July 3, 2003, the Examiner noted that claims 1-15 were pending, that claims 4, 5, 8-10 and 14 have been withdrawn from consideration, allowed claims 1-3, and rejected claims 6, 7 and 11-15. Claims 6, 11-13 and 15 have been amended, and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 6, 7 and 11-13 and 15 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

An interview was conducted with the Examiner on September 17, 2003.

In the Action the Examiner allowed claims 1-3 essentially because the claims recite an alignment rail and alignment groove. As discussed with the Examiner, claim 12 recites a rail and a groove. The Examiner indicated that claim 12 should have also been indicated as allowable. Claim 12 has been put into independent form and is submitted to be allowable.

Page 2 of the Office Action rejects claims 6-7, 11-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Kuhara and Yoshida.

As discussed with the Examiner, neither Kuhara or Yoshida disclose, as emphasized in claims 6, 11 and 15, ferrule, a single piece casing that has two offset holes one for holding the lens and one for holding the fiber where the single piece casing avoids the need for assembly by welding as is needed in the two piece casing of Kuhara and Yoshida. The invention also reduces the need for alignment of the lens and the fiber as also is needed in the Kuhara and Yoshida prior art where the piece holding the lens is separate from the piece holding the fiber and they need to be aligned when they are welded. As recognized by the Examiner this distinguishes over the prior art.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, Kuhara and Yoshida do not disclose a third casing hole, as emphasized in claim 13, that can be plugged by a removable plug that allows the third hole to release air trapped between the lens and fiber ferrule in the casing when the lens and ferrule are inserted into the casing. As recognized by the Examiner this distinguishes over the prior art.

It is submitted that the invention of the claims distinguishes over the prior art and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

It is submitted that claims 1-3 and 12 continue to be allowable. It is further submitted that the remaining pending claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims

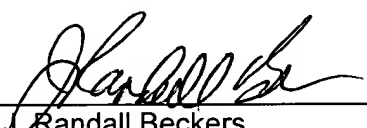
are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 10/3/3

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